



VICTORIAN  
CATCHMENT  
MANAGEMENT  
COUNCIL

# Victorian Catchment Management Council

## Annual Report 2019



Victorian Catchment Management Council Annual Report 2018-2019

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Cover photographs courtesy of Tracey Koper and Neil Meyers.

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## Chair's Foreword

This last reporting year saw the establishment of a new Council in October 2018. Prior to that, the previous members and I undertook a comprehensive review of our achievements over the three-year period 2015-18 and framed key messages to pass on to the incoming and returning members for their consideration.

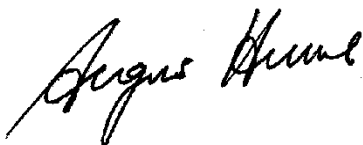
The new Council met in November 2018 for an introductory meeting, followed by a formal Council meeting in December, focussing on roles and responsibilities. The initial two-day induction session in February included a 'Who's who in catchment management', discussion about our statutory obligations, and a session with Peter Jennings OAM, Chair of the West Gippsland CMA about Vic Catchments and the catchment management framework. Subsequent meetings focused intensely on strategic planning (refer to the Strategic Plan 2018-21 on page 11 in this report).

I was very pleased to observe and be part of the transition from one Council to another, recognising the legacy from our predecessors, most particularly their Catchment Condition and Management Report of 2017 and the new thinking and perspectives brought in by our new members' wide and varied experience across integrated catchment management (ICM).

Council members from the past year 2018-19 participated in a varied range of roles across many aspects of ICM, supporting our numerous partner organisations at national, state and regional/local levels. Such interactions enhance our capacity to provide advice to government on a broad range of statewide issues, as required under legislation. We need to acknowledge the high value and positive nature of this arrangement, drawing government and communities more closely together to improve and restore or natural resource base. These partnerships are integral to the success of the local and regional communities across the state in many different ways, meeting local needs as well as the policy directions of government.

I wish to congratulate and thank my fellow Council members for their outstanding contributions over the past year, especially to the development of the Regional Catchment Strategy Guidelines and for their promotion of integrated catchment management in various forums. I acknowledge Amity Dunstan, Lance Lloyd, Peta Maddy and Geoff Park from the previous Council for their commitment and hard work. I am delighted that Alana Johnson, Joan Liley and Helen Vaughan have continued as members on the present Council, along with new members Rohan Henry, Kristen Jackson and Kirsten Shelly. And I wish to mention too the continued dedication of our Secretariat: Patricia Geraghty, Neil Meyers and Tracey Koper.

In accordance with the *Catchment and Land Protection Act 1994*, and the *Financial Management Act 1994*, I am pleased to present the Annual Report of the Victorian Catchment Management Council for the year ending 30 June 2019.



Angus Hume  
Chair  
22 August 2019

## Introduction to the VCMC

Appointed under the *Catchment and Land Protection Act 1994 (CaLP Act)*, the Victorian Catchment Management Council consists of up to 10 members appointed by Governor-in-Council on the basis of their skills, experience and knowledge of land protection, water resource management, primary industries, environment protection, conservation and local government.

### Council Members (1 July 2018 – 12 October 2018)

Angus Hume – Chairperson

- Board member, Southern Rural Water
- Former Chair, West Gippsland Catchment Management Authority
- Former dairy farmer from South Gippsland
- Qualifications: Bachelor of Education and company directorship via Australian Institute of Company Directors
- Strong background in natural resource management over three decades
- Former Co-chair, Gippsland Lakes Co-ordinating Committee
- Involved in Landcare since 1997, initially as President of the Stony Creek Landcare Group
- Former CEO of Greening Australia NSW
- Expedition leader, Australian National Antarctic Research Expeditions

Amity Dunstan

- Director of Row Crop Australia Pty Ltd
- Grain grower in southern Wimmera
- PhD candidate in Social Science
- Member of Federation University's Rural Incubator for Social and Economic Research
- Tutor at Federation University's Horsham and Ararat campuses
- Secretary of Telangatuk East Hall Committee
- VCMC delegate on the Interdepartmental Reference Group for the Victorian Rural Drainage Strategy 2016 – 2018
- VCMC delegate on the VRDS Implementation Working Group 2018

Alana Johnson

- Director, Goulburn Murray Water
- Ministerial Council for Women's Equality
- Victorian Rural Women's Network Reference Group
- President, Voices for Indi
- Founding Member, Australian Women in Agriculture
- Principal, Lurg Cattle Co.
- Landcare member since 1986
- Graduate, Australian Rural Leadership Program
- Graduate, Australian Institute of Company Directors
- Social Scientist and PhD Candidate, Monash University

Joan Liley

- Member, Commissioner for Environmental Sustainability Reference Group
- Chair, Central and South Gippsland Integrated Water Management Forum
- Committee member, Fish Creek Landcare
- Former Chair, South Gippsland Water
- Former Deputy Chair, West Gippsland Catchment Management Authority
- South Gippsland beef producer
- Bachelor of Commerce, Graduate Diploma Education
- Fellow, Australian Institute of Company Directors

#### Lance Lloyd

- Principal ecologist and Director of Lloyd Environmental Pty Ltd
- Honorary Research Fellow at Federation University Australia
- Chair, Great Australian Bight Resource Assessment Group, Australia Fisheries Management Authority
- Postgraduate degree in Science
- Past President of the River Basin Management Society
- Strong scientific background in catchment and water management
- Extensive consultation experience across the agricultural, community, environmental and business sectors

#### Peta Maddy

- Director, Southern Rural Water
- Chair, Interdepartmental Reference Group for the Victorian Rural Drainage Strategy
- Associate, Aither
- Previously Director, Grampians Wimmera Mallee Water, including Founding Chair of the Water Resources Committee (2015 to 2017)
- Past President, Victorian Branch of the Australian Water Association (2010 to 2013)
- Holds Bachelor of Chemical Engineering (Hon) and Science (Toxicology and Pharmacology)
- Graduate, Australian Institute of Company Directors

#### Geoff Park

- Director, Natural Decisions Pty Ltd
- Trustee, Norman Wettenhall Environment Trust
- Honorary Research Fellow, Dept of Forest and Ecosystem Science, University of Melbourne
- Former knowledge broker, North Central Catchment Management Authority
- Former team member, Future Farm Industries CRC (NRM investment frameworks)
- Holds Bachelor of Science (Hons.) and Diploma of Education

#### Helen Vaughan – Secretary's Nominee

- Deputy Secretary, Water and Catchments Group, Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning
- Former Regional Director, south-west Victoria with extensive experience in policy, research and policy implementation roles focused mainly on natural resource and emergency management
- BSc(Forestry) from Australian National University
- Employs a focus on developing constructive relationships with stakeholders and staff to ensure that priorities are well worked through and better outcomes achieved
- Brings different people together to gain different perspectives to develop robust approaches

#### **Council Members (13 October 2018 – 30 June 2019)**

##### Angus Hume – Chairperson

- Board member, Southern Rural Water
- Former Chair, West Gippsland Catchment Management Authority
- Former dairy farmer from South Gippsland
- Qualifications: Bachelor of Education and company directorship via Australian Institute of Company Directors
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- Involved in Landcare since 1997, initially as President of the Stony Creek Landcare Group
- Former CEO of Greening Australia NSW
- Expedition leader, Australian National Antarctic Research Expeditions

##### Alana Johnson

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- Ministerial Council for Women's Equality
- Victorian Rural Women's Network Reference Group
- President, Voices for Indi
- Founding Member, Australian Women in Agriculture
- Principal, Lurg Cattle Co.
- Landcare member since 1986

- Graduate, Australian Rural Leadership Program
- Graduate, Australian Institute of Company Directors
- Social Scientist and PhD Candidate, Monash University

#### Joan Liley

- Member, Commissioner for Environmental Sustainability Reference Group
- Chair, Central and South Gippsland Integrated Water Management Forum
- Committee member, Fish Creek Landcare
- Former Chair, South Gippsland Water
- Former Deputy Chair, West Gippsland Catchment Management Authority
- South Gippsland beef producer
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#### Helen Vaughan – Secretary’s Nominee

- Deputy Secretary, Water and Catchments Group, Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning
- Former Regional Director, south-west Victoria with extensive experience in policy, research and policy implementation roles focused mainly on natural resource and emergency management
- BSc(Forestry) from Australian National University
- Employs a focus on developing constructive relationships with stakeholders and staff to ensure that priorities are well worked through and better outcomes achieved
- Brings different people together to gain different perspectives to develop robust approaches

#### Dr Rohan Henry

- Manager Land and Waters at Bunurong Land Council Aboriginal Corporation
- Experienced project manager, environmental impact assessments and approvals
- Bachelor of Science (Honours) and a Doctor of Philosophy
- Member, Water for Victoria, Water for Country – Project Control Group,
- Member, Point Nepean National Park Management Advisory Committee
- Member, Rock Lobster Fishery Resource Assessment Group
- Past Member, Central Region Sustainable Water Strategy Review

#### Kristen Jackson

- Manager of Active Communities, Cardinia Shire Council
- World Urban Parks Board member and Chair Healthy Parks Healthy Cities Committee
- Keen interest in both environment and park and recreation management with prior experience on the National Board of Parks and Leisure Australia
- Former Manager Sustainability Planning for the City of Whittlesea
- Qualifications in planning, environment management and management
- Graduate of the Australian Institute of Company Directors’ Course

#### Dr Kirsten Shelly

- Manager of Catchment and Water Quality in Melbourne Water where she is responsible for setting the vision and strategic direction for the quality of catchments and waterways, drinking water, stormwater and sewerage
- Bachelor of Science with honours and a Doctor of Philosophy
- Previously has been a senior policy adviser in water portfolios
- Former Director of Water Strategies for the Queensland Water Commission.

## Council Staff

Patricia Geraghty  
Executive Officer

Neil Meyers  
Research and Policy Co-ordinator

Tracey Koper  
Project and Administration Officer

VCMC staff members are employees of DELWP - see DELWP 2018-19 Annual Report for statement of workforce data for current and previous financial year.

The VCMC secretariat employed three people (3 FTE) in 2018-19.

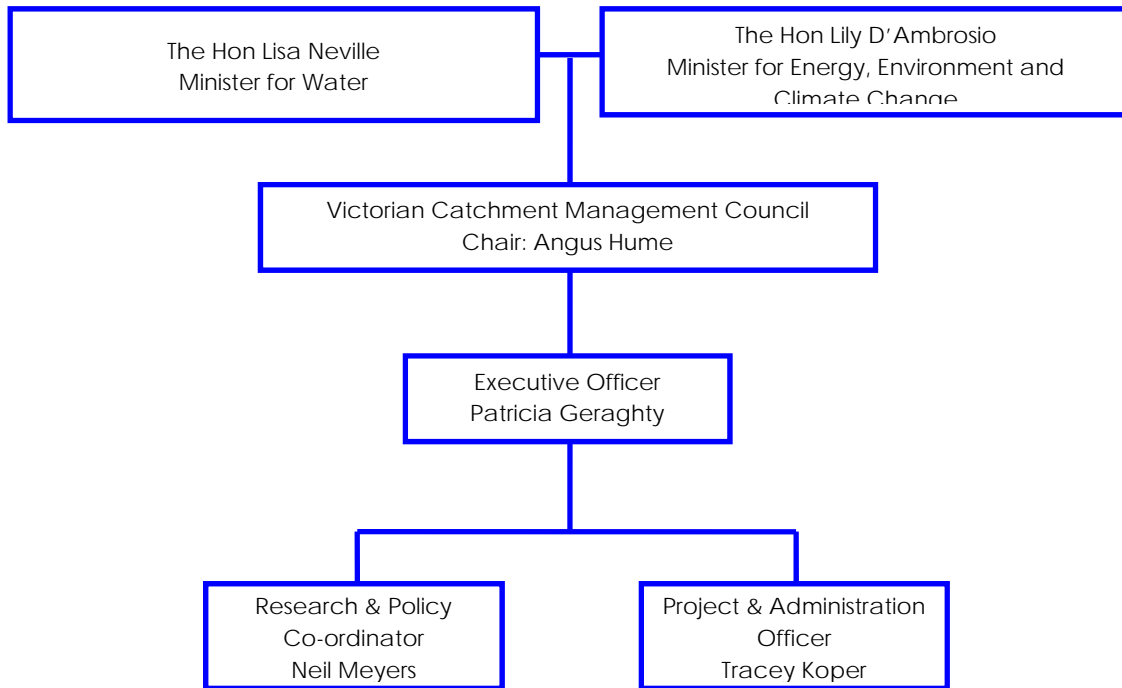
The breakdown of staff for the VCMC in 2018-19 is as follows:

	2017-2018	2018-2019
Senior Management	1	1
Administration Staff	3	2
TOTAL	4	3
Male	2	1
Female	2	2
Self-described	0	0
TOTAL	4	3



# Organisational Structure

1 July 2018 – 30 June 2019



## **VCMC Role**

### **Background**

The Victorian Catchment Management Council (Council) is the state government's peak advisory body on catchment management, established under the *Catchment and Land Protection Act 1994 (CaLP Act)* in 1997. The responsible Ministers for the 2018-19 reporting period were the Hon Lisa Neville MP, Minister for Water and the Hon Lily D'Ambrosio MP, Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change.

The Council is uniquely placed, independent of government agencies, Catchment Management Authorities and non-government organisations, to take a long-term view and influence change in working towards its vision for catchment management:

*Victoria will have healthy rivers flowing through ecologically sustainable and productive catchments.*

Council takes a statewide view on land, water and biodiversity issues and priorities related to catchment management. It facilitates integrated and coordinated catchment management through Victoria's Catchment Management Framework. Council works particularly closely with DELWP and CMAs. Also, Council encourages cooperation of other bodies such as non-government organisations involved in the management of land and water resources.

Council continued the excellent and highly productive working relationship with its Ministers over this financial year, and provided confidential advice on several matters.

### **Partnerships**

Council works particularly closely with the Catchment Management Authorities (CMAs) and with DELWP. In addition, Council encourages cooperation between the major sectors of local government, CMAs, community conservation and environment organisations, industry, state, regional and federal agencies by facilitating communication through various projects and forums. Council is also working to enhance relationships with numerous Traditional Owner organisations.

Council has a unique relationship with CMAs. It is not responsible for the operation of CMAs, nor does it oversee their work. However, Council must be receptive to issues emerging from the regions in developing a statewide position. It also provides the opportunity for CMAs to contribute to the policy and strategic picture at State level. Effective communication is critical to this process.

### **Statutory Roles**

Under Part 2, Section 9 of the *CaLP Act*, the functions of the Council are:

- (a) to advise the Minister and, if requested by any other Minister, that other Minister—
  - (i) on matters relating to catchment management which apply throughout the State; and
  - (ii) on the condition of the land and water resources of the State; and
  - (iii) on priorities for catchment management throughout the State; and
  - (iv) on priorities to be given on the need for research and investigation on matters related to catchment management which apply throughout the State;
- (b) to encourage the co-operation of persons and bodies involved in the management of land and water resources in furthering the objectives of this Act;
- (c) to promote community awareness and understanding of issues relating to catchment management;
- (d) to advise the Minister and provide information to the Minister on any matter referred to it by the Minister.

The Council is also required to advise the Minister under Part 8, Division 1 Section 69 (2), (3) and (4) of the *CaLP Act*, on actions before recommendation for the declaration or revocation of a declaration of any pest plant or animal:

- (2) Before recommending the declaration, or the revocation of a declaration, of an animal as an established pest animal the Minister must get advice on the proposal from the Council.
- (3) Before recommending the declaration, or the revocation of the declaration, of a plant as a noxious weed the Minister must get advice on the proposal from the Council and the Authority of the region in which the declaration applies or will apply.
- (4) The advice of the Council or an Authority under sub-section (2) or (3) must include—
  - (a) an assessment of the extent and severity of impact of the animal or plant in Victoria; and
  - (b) suggested measures for the management of any infestation of the animal or plant; and

- (c) an estimate of the cost of these measures and how it might be funded.
- (5) The Minister may, in a particular case or class of cases, exempt the Council or an Authority from complying with sub-section (4).

Furthermore, under Part 4, Section 19 Division 2 'Action Statements and Critical Habitats' of the *Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act* (1988), the Council is to provide comment on list nominations and action statements:

19. Action statements

- (1) The Secretary must prepare an action statement for any listed taxon or community of flora or fauna or potentially threatening process as soon as possible after that taxon, community or process is listed.
- (2) The action statement must set out what has been done to conserve and manage that taxon or community or process and what is intended to be done and may include information on what needs to be done.
- (3) In preparing or amending an action statement the Secretary must consider –
  - (a) any management advice given by the Committee, the Conservation Advisory Committee and the Victorian Catchment Management Council; and
  - (b) any other relevant nature conservation, social and economic matters.

**VCMC Committees**

Under the *CaLP Act*, the Council may, from its members, appoint any committees that it considers necessary and may abolish any such committee; and determine the procedure of each committee. The nature and function of VCMC committees and working groups are described in the 'Operations of the VCMC' later in this report.

Members of Council were also involved individually in a range of other external committees in 2018-19. A list of these committees is provided in Appendix 2.

## Executive Officer's Comment

This past year has seen a change-over in Council membership, a time to look back on achievements during the previous term (and even earlier), and a refresh regarding directions for the new term 2018-21. Each Council's plans are a mix of compliance and performance actions, embedded with both a sense of legacy and in terms of current and emerging opportunities and challenges. So, it is a time to reflect and also to forge new pathways and relationships, which is exciting for Council members and staff alike.

From an external perspective, the major achievement of the Council over the past year was the development of the Regional Catchment Strategy Guidelines, in near-final form as planned by 30 June 2019. This process was undertaken by a collaborative Working Group, comprising Council, CMA CEOs and DELWP members, under Council leadership and chaired by Angus Hume, to develop guidelines for the next suite of Regional Catchment Strategies. There were several rounds of consultation on successive drafts and workshops involving RCS Managers and DELWP staff to debate and progress issues such as consistency of format, aggregated outcomes across the state and the promotion of RCSs as the key vehicle for integrated catchment management at the regional level. The Guidelines provided a wonderful opportunity for Council to work constructively with our major partners and to play an important and directive role in the evolution of the catchment management framework in Victoria.

In reflecting on 2018-19 from an internal perspective, I found the handover from one Council to the next was particularly effective. While this is the fifth such change in my time as Executive Officer, the transition was handled very thoughtfully by the previous members, with a rigorous process in place to guide the incoming members in their new role, including the proposal for what proved to be a productive and enjoyable staged induction process. The new Council had a balance of continuing and new members, and Angus Hume continued in his role as Chair. The strategic planning and decisions regarding priority actions was undertaken with commitment and gusto by the Council during the first months of their term. Angus was as always, a strong leader both for Council and for the broader catchment management framework in Victoria and nationally. Thanks to Neil Meyers and Tracey Koper, my long-term team members, for their competence, patience and humour.



Patricia Geraghty  
Executive Officer  
22 August 2019

## WHAT VCMC DOES and WHERE VCMC WANTS TO BE:

**ADVISING AND INFLUENCING** Minister(s) through VCMC's primary role under the *Catchment and Land Protection Act 1994*, advising on any matters applying to statewide integrated catchment management (ICM), catchment condition, management priorities and R&D priorities; **being a trusted advisor; enjoying ongoing active interaction with Ministers and their offices**

**ENCOURAGING** co-operation of persons and bodies in ICM; **greater alignment of policies, responsibilities, and funding of ICM implementation; encouraging effective community ownership of ICM; encouraging partnering with Traditional Owners in ICM**

**PROMOTING** community awareness and understanding of ICM issues; **promoting ICM and regional delivery; working with and supporting VCMC's key partners: Vic Catchments, CMAs and DELWP**

**ASSESSING** the condition and management of the land and water resources every 5 years; **influencing and monitoring take-up of CCMR 2017 recommendations, including improved catchment condition and management monitoring and reporting, and adoption of an on-going and measurable engagement process with all catchment communities; preparing for CCMR 2022**

**ESTABLISHING** the Regional Catchment Strategy (RCS) Guidelines for RCS 2020-26 through a collaborative process; **releasing innovative Guidelines for improved RCSs, including more consistent monitoring and reporting of catchment condition, and a more consistent format; advocating for adequate and secure funding for RCS development and implementation**

## Operations of the VCMC

### Performance against objectives, functions, powers and duties

The functions of the Victorian Catchment Management Council (Council) are described in the *Catchment and Land Protection Act 1994* (CaLP Act) S.9, comprising providing advice to the Minister/s:

- (i) on matters relating to catchment management which apply throughout the State; and
- (ii) on the condition of the land and water resources of the State; and
- (iii) on priorities for catchment management throughout the State; and
- (iv) on priorities to be given on the need for research and investigation on matters related to catchment management which apply throughout the State.

Council must also encourage the co-operation of persons and bodies involved in the management of land and water resources in furthering the objectives of this Act; promote community awareness and understanding of issues relating to catchment management; and advise the Minister/s and provide information to the Minister/s on any matter referred to it by the Minister/s. Additional functions relate to the declaration or the revocation of a declaration of pest plant and animal species under the CaLP Act, specific functions under the *Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988*; and compliance with the *Public Administration Act 2004* and other related acts.

There was a new Council appointed on 13 October 2018, as detailed elsewhere in this report. The Chair Mr Angus Hume was re-appointed for the 2018-2021 term. There were two continuing members and three new members. Helen Vaughan, Deputy Secretary of the Water and Catchments Group in DELWP was re-appointed as the Secretary's nominee to Council.

Council is an advisory body. Statutory obligations were met through the provision of confidential advice on a range of topics to the responsible Ministers for the 2018-19 reporting period. They were: The Hon Lisa Neville MP, Minister for Water and The Hon Lily D'Ambrosio MP, Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change.

During 2018-19, Council submitted comments on the interim State of the Environment Report, the Draft Deer Management Strategy and the State Environment Protection Policy (Waters). All submissions and advice involved active participation and support from the Council Secretariat staff.

Advice was provided by Council through 2018-19 as required under the *Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988* on nominations for final listings supported or rejected by the Scientific Advisory Committee and responses to Draft Action Statements, for which details are found later in this report. All other matters of compliance with the *Public Administration Act 2004* and other relevant acts were met.

Note that S.9J in the CaLP Act requires Council to report on the operation of this act and the carrying out of its functions. In past annual reports, this requirement involved reporting on various programs and projects undertaken by the Catchment Management Authorities and by central agencies, within the integrated catchment management framework. These reports are available elsewhere and can be found in the annual reports of these authorities and agencies, and thus are not duplicated here.

### Performance against operational and budgetary objectives, including initiatives and key achievements

The key ongoing objectives for Council were its statutory obligations, comprising the provision of confidential advice to the relevant Ministers as described in the previous section. In most cases, this was in response to a verbal or written request but in some cases, Council provided advice which it decided was of significance. All advice was provided in a timely manner.

### Budget

The budget was \$538,764 (refer to VCMC Finance Report). The overall expenditure for the 2018-19 period was \$538,764 resulting in a variance of 0%. This was within Council's budgetary objective of 10% or less variance.

## **Catchment Condition and Management Report 2017 recommendations**

Council was referred to in the implementation of DELWP's (formerly DEPI) VAGO Action Plan, which responded to the Victorian Auditor-General's 2014 report on the audit *Effectiveness of Catchment Management Authorities*. Council was advised in May 2015 that the Water and Catchments Executive in DELWP approved a one-off grant of \$200,000 to assist Council's participation in that implementation of the Action Plan over the period 2015-17. This grant enabled the Chair to lead the VAGO Action Plan Project Control Board, staff to deliver key input to project teams and initial planning for the Catchment Condition and Management Report (CCMR) 2017 project during 2016-17. Actions arising from the VAGO report continued during 2017-19 with Angus Hume chairing the Our Catchments Our Communities Strategic Reference Group and the Executive Officer Patricia Geraghty on the Our Catchment Our Communities Implementation Committee.

Council's work based around catchment condition and management reporting over the period July – October 2018 directly related to the major goals in the 2015-18 Strategic Plan: developing and completing the *Catchment Condition and Management Report 2017*; and providing leadership to the Catchment Management Framework.

## **Regional Catchment Strategy Guidelines process**

Council set up a collaborative process to develop the guidelines for the next suite of Regional Catchment Strategies, as in its role under the CaLP Act. The process started in September 2017, with the first meeting of the Working Group in October. Mid-term reviews of the current RCSs were approved by each CMA Board and sent to Council and to DELWP for their information during 2017. Recommendations from the reviews were useful to the RCS Guidelines Working Group comprised Angus Hume (Chair), Geoff Park and Patricia Geraghty (VCMC), David Buntine and Chris Norman (CMA CEOs), and Adam Hood and Luke Murphy (DELWP), and supported by Tracey Koper and Neil Meyers. Workshops with the Working Group and RCS Managers from all CMAs were held in December 2017, March 2018 and in March 2019. Insights from the workshops enabled the Working Group to start developing draft RCS Guidelines in May 2018 and assisted with refinements during 2018 and the first half of 2019.

Council endorsed a draft of the guidelines at the final meeting in October 2018. At the first meeting of the incoming Council in December 2018, new members of the Working Group were appointed: Dr Rohan Henry and Kristen Jackson, and briefings on the RCS guidelines project to date were included in the agenda at that and at subsequent meetings of Council. Angus Hume continued in his role as Chair. Patricia Geraghty organised visits with all ten CMAs during Jan-Feb 2019 to discuss the guidelines and remaining issues, as well as suggestions for improvements. Two of these meetings included members of Council: Alana Johnson at the meeting with the North East CMA Board and staff, and Rohan Henry at the meeting with Mallee CMA Board and staff. Further consultation occurred during March and April, and Council VCMC discussed a near-final draft at its May meeting. There were several issues raised regarding resourcing for the development of RCSs over the 2019-2021 period and hence of appropriate timelines, preparatory to endorsement of the Guidelines, planned for the first meeting of the next financial year.

## **Induction of incoming Council and development of Strategic Plan 2018-2021**

A substantial review process was undertaken by the outgoing Council during September -October 2018. The process included facilitated sessions with members and then staff, resulting in a handover report for the incoming Council. This report included several wide-ranging recommendations for consideration.

Once the incoming Council was announced in October 2018, an introductory session was arranged in November 2018, followed by a formal meeting in December, which focussed on roles and responsibilities. The calendar for the next year was finalised, including an induction on 7-8 February at Inverloch. The induction included consideration of 'Who's who in catchment management', statutory obligations for the new term, a session with Peter Jennings Chair of the West Gippsland CMA about Vic Catchments and the catchment management framework, and an initial discussion about the options for the Strategic Plan and Action Plan to be developed over the following period.

The March meeting focused on strategic planning and starting an action plan. Bruce Turner was engaged as a facilitator and a small working group of Angus Hume, Alana Johnson, Patricia Geraghty and Tracey Koper met with Bruce several times to finalise the agenda.

The long session covered a great range of topics and included robust discussion and energetic participation from all members and staff.

Based on the notes from that session and the handover report from the previous Council, Joan Liley and Patricia Geraghty drafted an outline for the Strategic Plan 2018-21 during April, and this was discussed at the May meeting of Council, for final drafting. The Strategic Plan is shown on page 11 of this report. A draft Action Plan was prepared during June for discussion at the July meeting.

## **Relationships**

Links with the Office of the Commissioner for Environmental Sustainability continued to over the past year, with an agenda and agreement around collaboration, removing duplication and a shared reporting framework. Angus Hume was on the Commissioner's Environmental Reporting Project Control Board to guide the development of State of the Environment reporting and Patricia Geraghty and Neil Meyers were on the Commissioner's Technical Advisory Group. The final meeting of that Technical Advisory group was held in April, with briefings on the completed State of the Environment and on two other reports. Council member Joan Liley was appointed to the Commissioner's Stakeholder Reference Group until February 2019, when she was replaced by Kirsten Shelly.

Vic Catchments was established as an industry- wide grouping of CMA Chairs supported by an Executive Officer and as a vehicle for building partnerships and exchanging information. Council's Chair and Executive Officer have ex officio membership, along with the CMAs CEOs, in the Forum, ensuring the continuing close relationship of Council with the CMAs. Patricia Geraghty was in the CMA CEOs' Group and was nominated as a member of its Strategy and Planning Portfolio. She was also involved in the CEOs' work on strategic priorities for Vic Catchments. The Chair and Executive Officer of Vic Catchments met several times with Angus Hume and Patricia Geraghty regarding the relationship between VCMC and Vic Catchments, as well as options for more strategic approaches in catchment management across the state.

The extensive work involved in drafting the Victorian Rural Drainage Strategy (VRDS) was undertaken with Peta Maddy as the independent Chair of the VRDS Inter-departmental Reference Group, and Amity Dunstan appointed as the Council representative on that Reference Group. Amity represented the Council on the VRDS Implementation Working Group. The Strategy was released in late 2018.

Council members and staff also participated in conferences, workshops, committees and many regional activities. These included the Marine and Coastal Policy Stakeholder Reference Group meetings, 'Value of Integrated Catchment Management' conference (introduced by Alana Johnson as Deputy Chair VCMC), 'Our City in Nature' event hosted by PPW CMA and other organisations, Victorian Inter-agency Invasive Species Committee (VCMC represented by Neil Meyers), the Centre for Aquatic Pollution Identification and Management Research Summit, and the NRM Regions Australian Environmental Biosecurity Working Group.



## VCMC Finance Report

The following table outlines operating revenue and expenditure for the 2014-2015, 2015-16, 2016-17, 2017-18 and 2018 – 19 financial years.

*VCMC Financial Report 2014-15 to 2018-19.*

	2014-2015	2015-16	2016-17	2017-2018	2018-2019
<b>Operating Revenue</b>	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$
DELWP Allocation	728,929	701,089	689,940	603,000	538,764
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>728,929<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>701,089<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>689,940</b>	<b>603,000</b>	<b>538,764</b>

<b>Expenses</b>	\$	\$	\$	\$	
	515,275	490,089	645,602	603,000	538,764
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>515,275</b>	<b>490,089</b>	<b>645,602</b>	<b>603,000</b>	<b>538,764</b>

Notes:

1. An additional \$200,000 was received from DELWP in May 2015, in the form of a one-off grant to assist the Council's participation in the implementation of DELWP's Action Plan which responds to the Victorian Auditor-General's Report on the Effectiveness of Catchment Management Authorities.
2. This grant enabled continuing participation in the Action Plan activities (refer Note 2) and to further the Council's relevant work on catchment condition and management reporting over the period 2015-2016 and 2016-2017, in alignment with the goals in *Our Catchments Our Communities*.

VCMC, in conjunction with DELWP, has transitioned its accounting policies and financial reporting from current Australian Standards to Australian equivalents of International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS).

### Significant Changes in Financial Position and Performance, and Subsequent Events

There were no matters which changed the Council's performance or financial position during the 2018 – 19 reporting period. Further, there were no subsequent events which will have a material impact on the Council's future operations or financial position that occurred after this report was finalised.

### Financial Management Compliance Attestation

I, Angus Hume, on behalf of the Responsible Body, certify that the Victorian Catchment Management Council has complied with the applicable Standing Directions of the Minister for Finance under the *Financial Management Act 1994* and Instructions.

## Statutory Responsibilities

### VCMC Meetings

	July 18	August 18	September 18	October 18	December 18	February 19	March 19	May 19
1 July 2018 – 12 October 2018								
Angus Hume	✓	✓		✓				
Lance Lloyd	✓	✓	✓	✓				
Amity Dunstan	✓	✓	✓	✓				
Geoff Park	✓	✓		✓				
Peta Maddy	✓	✓	✓	✓				
Alana Johnson	✓	✓	✓	✓				
Joan Liley	✓		✓	✓				
Helen Vaughan		✓		✓				
13 October 2018 – 30 June 2019								
Angus Hume					✓	✓	✓	
Alana Johnson					✓	✓		✓
Joan Liley					✓	✓	✓	✓
Kirsten Shelly					✓	✓	✓	
Rohan Henry					✓	✓	✓	
Kristen Jackson					✓	✓	✓	✓
Helen Vaughan					✓	✓		✓

All absences were approved by the Chair prior to each meeting.

### Freedom of Information

The VCMC is considered to be a "Government Agency" under the *Freedom of Information Act 1982* (FOI Act) and is required to comply with the procedures that have been prescribed under which members of the public may gain access to information held by agencies. A decision to release information is made by an Authorised Officer. The VCMC has determined that its Authorised Officer is the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning Freedom of Information Manager, Ms Kim Reeves (03) 9637 9730.

During 2018 – 19, no requests were received for access to documents under the *FOI Act 1982*.

Documents which are maintained in the possession of Council include:

Internal working papers;

- Correspondence from Ministers and Members of Parliament, Government Departments and agencies, members of the public and the private sector;
- Reports prepared by consultants commissioned by Council;
- Accounts records;
- Personnel and salary records; and
- Organisation and accommodation records.

You have a right to apply for access to documents held by VCMC and covered by the *FOI Act 1982*. This applies to both documents created by VCMC as well as those supplied to VCMC. You may apply for the original or for a copy.

FOI requests (\$28.90) must be made in writing to:

Ms Kim Reeves  
Freedom of Information Manager  
Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning  
P.O. Box 500  
East Melbourne Vic 3002  
Tel: (03) 9637 9730  
Email: kim.reeves@delwp.vic.gov.au

Requests should be as specific as possible to enable the FOI Authorised Officer to identify relevant documents as quickly and efficiently as possible.

Once your letter requesting access has been received, the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning must respond to you as soon as possible, but not later than 45 days, outlining its decision on your request. If the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning refuses you access to the documents sought, you can appeal to the Principal Officer (Patricia Geraghty, Executive Officer) for an internal review, but you must do so within 28 days of the letter sent to you. The Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning must then reconsider your request and respond to you within 14 days.

If you wish to appeal further to the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal, you must do so within 60 days of the date you were notified of the internal review.

### **Consultancies**

The VCMC commissioned no consultancies >\$10,000 in 2018 – 19.  
The VCMC commissioned no consultancies <\$10,000 in 2018 – 19.

### **Competitive Neutrality Policy**

Competitive neutrality requires government businesses to ensure where services compete, or potentially compete with the private sector, any advantage arising solely from their government ownership be removed if it is not in the public interest. Government businesses are required to cost and price these services as if they were privately owned. Competitive neutrality policy supports fair competition between public and private businesses and provides government businesses with a tool to enhance decisions on resource allocation. This policy does not override other policy objectives of government and focuses on efficiency in the provision of service.

The Victorian Catchment Management Council continues to comply with the requirements of the Competitive Neutrality Policy.

### **Victorian Industry Participation Policy Act**

The *Victorian Industry Participation Policy Act 2003* requires a public body to apply Local Jobs First – Victorian Industry Participation Policy in all procurement and project activities valued at:

- \$3 million or more in metropolitan Melbourne and for statewide projects; and
- \$1 million or more in regional Victoria.

The VCMC had no contracts that were commenced or completed in the 2018 – 19 period to which Local Jobs First – Victorian Industry Participation Policy applied.

### **Major Contracts**

There were no major contracts valued at \$10 million or more entered into in 2018 – 19.

## Protected Disclosures Act

The *Protected Disclosure Act 2012* (PD Act) enables people to make disclosures about improper conduct by public officers and public bodies. The Act aims to ensure openness and accountability by encouraging people to make disclosures and protecting them when they do.

There were no disclosures made under the *Protected Disclosures Act 2012* during the 2018 – 19 reporting period.

### What is a 'protected disclosure'?

A protected disclosure is a complaint of corrupt or improper conduct by a public officer or a public body. The Victorian Catchment Management Council is a "public body" for the purposes of the Act.

### What is 'improper or corrupt conduct'?

Improper or corrupt conduct involves substantial:

- mismanagement of public resources; or
- risk to public health or safety or the environment; or
- corruption.

The conduct must be criminal in nature or a matter for which an officer could be dismissed.

### How do I make a 'Protected Disclosure'?

You can make a protected disclosure about the Victorian Catchment Management Council or its council members, officers or employees by contacting DELWP or IBAC on the contact details provided below.

Please note that the Victorian Catchment Management Council is not able to receive protected disclosures.

### How can I access the Victorian Catchment Management Council's procedures for the protection of persons from detrimental action?

The Victorian Catchment Management Council uses established procedures from DELWP for the protection of persons from detrimental action in reprisal for making a protected disclosure about the Victorian Catchment Management Council or its employees. You can access DELWP's procedures on its website at: [www.delwp.vic.gov.au](http://www.delwp.vic.gov.au).

Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP)

Jennifer Berenson, Senior Advisor, Privacy and Ombudsman

PO Box 500, East Melbourne Vic 3002.

Telephone: 03 9637 8697

Email: [jennifer.berenson@delwp.vic.gov.au](mailto:jennifer.berenson@delwp.vic.gov.au)

Website: [www.delwp.vic.gov.au](http://www.delwp.vic.gov.au)

Independent Broad-Based Anti-Corruption Commission (IBAC) Victoria

Level 1, North Tower, 459 Collins Street Melbourne 3000

Mail: IBAC, GPO Box 24234 Melbourne 3001

Website: [www.ibac.vic.gov.au](http://www.ibac.vic.gov.au)

Phone: 1300 735 135

Email: see website above for the secure email disclosure process, which also provides for anonymous disclosures

## Employment and Conduct Principles

Victorian Public Service employment and conduct principles are applied in the appointment and management of staff. The VCMC follows the principles used by DELWP, in accordance with Government directives.

Public entities are required to have in place employment processes that will ensure that:

- employment decisions are based on merit;
- public sector employees are treated fairly and reasonably;
- equal employment opportunity is provided;
- human rights as set out in the Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities are upheld; and

- public sector employees have a reasonable avenue of redress against unfair or unreasonable treatment.

Codes of conduct and standards issued by the Victorian Public Sector Commission (VPSC) include:

- the Code of Conduct for Victorian Public Sector Employees
- the Conflict of Interest Policy Framework and the Gifts Benefits and Hospitality Policy Framework

For further information, please refer to the VPSC's website ([www.vpsc.vic.gov.au](http://www.vpsc.vic.gov.au)).

### **Building Act**

VCMC does not own or control any government buildings and consequently is exempt from notifying its compliance with the building and maintenance provisions of the *Building Act 1993*.

### **Environmental Reporting**

Under FRD24C, CMAs are classified under the "other public sector entities" and are encouraged to adopt the requirements of this Financial Reporting Direction. The FRD24C requirements are not mandatory for public agencies; they apply only to Government Departments, the Environment Protection Agency and Sustainability Victoria. The VCMC has been incorporated in DELWP's Environmental Reporting under FRD24C.

### **Additional VCMC Information Available on Request**

In compliance with the requirements of the Standing Directions of the Minister for Finance, details in respect of the items listed below have been retained by the Victorian Catchment Management Council and are available (in full) on request, subject to the provisions of the *Freedom of Information Act 1982*:

- (a) Details of publications produced by the Victorian Catchment Management Council about itself
- (b) A statement of completion of declarations of pecuniary interests by relevant officers

The information is available on request from:

The Project Officer

Victorian Catchment Management Council

Phone: (03) 9637 9892

Email: [tracey.koper@delwp.vic.gov.au](mailto:tracey.koper@delwp.vic.gov.au)

Web: [www.vcmc.vic.gov.au](http://www.vcmc.vic.gov.au)

### **Additional information included in annual report**

Details in respect of the following items have been included in the Victorian Catchment Management Council's annual report, on the pages indicated below:

- (a) a list of the Victorian Catchment Management Council's major committees; the purposes of each committee; and the extent to which the purposes have been achieved (*on page 21*).

### **Government Advertising Expenditure**

VCMC's expenditure in the 2018 – 19 reporting period on government campaign expenditure did not exceed \$100,000.

### **Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Expenditure**

For the 2018 – 19 reporting period, VCMC had a total ICT expenditure of \$0.

"ICT Expenditure" refers to VCMC's costs in providing business enabling ICT services.

## Compliance Disclosure Index

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FRD 22H	Nature and range of services provided	8
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\* See DELWP Annual Report 2018-19

## Committees and Working Groups that included a member or staff member of VCMC in 2018-2019

Group Name	VCMC Representative
CMA CEOs Forum	Patricia Geraghty
CMA CEOs' Strategy and Planning Portfolio Group	Patricia Geraghty
CMA Chairs Forum	Angus Hume
CMA Communication Officers Forum	Tracey Koper
Commissioner for Environmental Sustainability's State of the Environment Reporting Reform Project Control Board	Angus Hume
Commissioner for Environmental Sustainability's State of the Environment Stakeholder Reference Group	Joan Liley / Kirsten Shelly
Commissioner for Environmental Sustainability's State of the Environment Technical Advisory Group	Patricia Geraghty
DELWP MER Working Group	Neil Meyers
DELWP Victorian Landcare and Catchment Management Magazine Editorial Committee	Tracey Koper
NRM Regions Australian Environmental Biosecurity Working Group	Neil Meyers
Our Catchment Our Communities Implementation Committee	Patricia Geraghty
Our Catchments Our Communities Strategic Reference Group	Angus Hume
Riparian Advisory Group	Joan Liley
VAGO Implementation Project Control Board	Angus Hume
Vic Catchments	Angus Hume, Patricia Geraghty
Victorian Inter Agency Invasive Species Committee	Neil Meyers

## **VCMC activities and responsibilities under the Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988**

Nominations for final FFG listings supported by the Scientific Advisory Committee (SAC) and VCMC:

### **Taxa**

There were no taxa identified and supported for listing under the *Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988* by the SAC and VCMC.

### **Communities**

There were no communities identified and supported for listing under the *Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988* by the SAC and VCMC.

### **Potentially Threatening Processes**

There were no potentially threatening processes identified and supported for listing under the *Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988* by the SAC and VCMC.

### **VCMC Responses to Draft Action Statements:**

Under Section 19 (1) of the *Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988*, the Secretary must prepare an action statement for any listed taxon or community of flora or fauna or potentially threatening process as soon as possible after that taxon, community or process is listed. Under Section 19 (3) of the *Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988*, the Secretary must consider any management advice given by the Victorian Catchment Management Council.

There were no Draft Action Statements provided for comment during 2018-2019.

### **Declaration of Pest Plants and Animals**

VCMC Activities and responsibilities under Section 69 the *Catchment and Land Protection Act 1994*  
Before making a declaration of a species as an established pest species on public land in Victoria, the Minister must get advice on the proposal from the VCMC.

During 2018-2019, the Minister did not seek advice from the VCMC on any recommendations regarding the declaration of pest plants and animals.



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